

DEPARTMENT OF ARMY

**RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
HANDBOOK**



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
(FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & COMPTROLLER)
COMPTROLLER PROPONENCY OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310-0109**

OCTOBER 1995

*IF YOU WANT ONE YEAR OF PROSPERITY,
GROW GRAIN.*

*IF YOU WANT TEN YEARS OF PROSPERITY,
GROW TREES.*

*IF YOU WANT ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF
PROSPERTIY, GROW PEOPLE.*

- ANCIENT CHINESE PROVERB -

PREFACE

This handbook was written for resource management careerists (military and civilian) to assist them in their roles as mentors or associates as they participate in the Resource Management Mentorship Program (RMMP).

These materials have been tailored to the Department of the Army, and the Resource Management community in particular. Included is pertinent information needed to facilitate a formal mentoring program, as well as participate in a mentoring relationship at all levels of Department of the Army.

This handbook is a revision and update of the June 1993 Mentoring Handbook.

Comments and suggestions for improving this handbook should be sent to:

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Army has always advocated some form of mentoring, whether formal or informal, as an integral part of its leader development. The Army is dependent on the development of competent and confident leaders, both military and civilian, in order for it to accomplish its mission. This development process consists of three equally important pillars: institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development. These pillars support the framework of nine leadership competencies: communications, supervision, teaching and counseling (mentoring), team development, technical and tactical proficiency, decision making, planning, use of available systems, and professional ethics.

The success of tomorrow's Army depends on how well we train, develop, manage, and retain the workforce. Mentoring is our start point for moving forward. It can be assimilated into our culture with minimal turmoil and maximum benefit and provide competent, confident leaders - trained and ready for tomorrow.

Mentoring is a recognized professional strategy used by organizations throughout the United States. The process of mentoring has many dimensions--all of which can be useful to the person being mentored. There are three distinct, but interrelated, mentoring approaches to assist us in training, developing, managing, and retaining our workforce. They are (1) formal mentoring, (2) informal mentoring, and (3) supervisory/managerial mentoring. These approaches are management tools designed to assist, not usurp, a supervisor's prerogative in carrying out his or her responsibilities. Used interchangeably, they help develop a strong resilient workforce.

The **formal mentoring** process links an experienced person, the mentor, with a less experienced person, the associate, to foster professional and personal growth by sharing knowledge and insight that have been learned over the years.

The mentoring process requires the mentor and associate to work together to reach specific goals and to provide each other with sufficient feedback to ensure that the goals are reached. It is a reciprocal partnership in which each stimulates the growth of each other.

Together, the mentor and the associate share experiences that, over time, can build a successful and enriching partnership. The success of the partnership depends on both partners expending time and effort to make the partnership work. Both partners should commit equal time and effort. Understanding the expectations of each other ensures that expectations will be met. Once expectations are defined, both partners can then build a framework for meeting those expectations.

GROW PEOPLE!

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CHAPTER 1

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

CHAPTER 1

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

Underlying the program's establishment in FY 94, were five basic principles:

- (1) All resource management employees, military and civilian, regardless of their skill levels, are capable of improving their current performance.
- (2) Professional development and growth should be both continuous and systematic.
- (3) Developmental efforts or plans should be based on comprehensive assessment of needs and the matching of these needs to specific developmental experiences.
- (4) Skill development should be consistent with the Army Civilian Training, Education, and Development System (ACTEDS) Plan for resource management employees and with the Functional Area 45 Professional Development Guide for military personnel.
- (5) While this formal mentoring program is intended to enhance competitiveness and advancement potential, participation in the program is not a guarantee of, nor prerequisite for, promotion.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide a source of career information and guidance to all resource management employees, military and civilian, who are interested in improving their technical and leadership skills.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

To partner a more experienced resource management careerist, mentor, with a less experienced resource management careerist, associate, for the specific purpose to improve overall job performance of the associate, provide the associate insight into the Army culture, and assist the associate in making career decisions.

To improve specific job skills and abilities of resource management careerists, thereby increasing their productivity and potential for higher jobs.

To improve employment and advancement opportunities for all resource management employees to become part of the Army leadership.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The RMMP is specifically designed for individuals interested in skill development and improving their overall job performance. The RMMP is open Department of Army-wide and participation is voluntary.

Civilian and Military Eligibility Requirements:

- (1) Comptroller Career Program (CP-11) careerists in grades GS-09 - SES.
- (2) Functional Area (FA 45), Comptroller, in ranks CPT - GO.
- (3) Have a minimum three years of federal service.
- (4) Have a personal commitment to the Department of Army.

Program Length:

The maximum time limit is one year (per application). However, the length of each partnership could vary according to the needs and interests of the mentor and associate. Partnerships **can** extend beyond the one year either informally or a RMMP application can be submitted by both partners for formal continuance.

A partnership can be terminated at any time during the year. The "no fault termination clause" can be used by either partner at any time, for any reason.

CHAPTER 2

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CHARACTERISTICS

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ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CHARACTERISTICS

MENTOR ROLES:

There are numerous roles for a mentor during the partnership. The roles will vary depending on the needs of the associate, and on the partnership the mentor builds with the associate.

Like the hands on a clock, the mentor's roles point in many different directions. There are at least ten different roles: teacher, guide, counselor, motivator, sponsor, coach, advisor, referral agent, role model, and door opener.

At any given time, an associate may require the mentor to perform one or all of these roles. How often the roles are changed depends on the needs of the associate. Each of the roles are explained below to help the mentor prepare for the different directions he or she will take.

TEACHER: As a teacher, the mentor may need to instruct the associate on the skills and knowledges required to perform the job successfully. This role requires the mentor to outline the "nuts and bolts" of the position and to share his or her experience as a seasoned professional.

To teach the fundamentals of the position, a mentor needs to first determine what knowledges and skills are required to successfully perform the job.

TIP: Review the position description, performance standards, and Army Civilian Training Education Development System (ACTEDS) Plan for the specific job and identify the knowledges and skills required for the position.

Once a mentor has identified the knowledges and skills that are required for the position, he or she then needs to identify those knowledges and skills the associate already has and those that require development. The mentor concentrates his or her efforts on helping the associate develop those knowledges and skills that require development.

TIP: If the mentor is the associate's supervisor, the mentor may assign specific tasks, set deadlines, and frequently review the associate's work to determine what knowledges and skills need to be developed.

It is in the mentor's best interest to ensure that the associate develops professionally. A mentor should make a point of explaining, in detail, what is expected from the associate.

If a mentor is helping an associate develop critical job tasks, examples or samples should be provided for the associate to follow.

The most important developmental method a mentor can use is to answer the associate's questions. Remember that the mentor is not required to be the "expert" on everything. A good mentor knows when to direct the associate to a knowledgeable source. A knowledgeable source can be a person or materials (e.g., handbooks, organizational charts, ACTEDS Plan, seminars, night classes, conferences, Career Program Manager, or servicing civilian personnel office).

As a teacher, it is important to share the wisdom of past mistakes. An associate can learn from the mentor's past experiences. The associate also comes away from the partnership knowing that no one is perfect. A mentor should make a point to relate learning experiences, special anecdotes, and "trials" whenever appropriate. It is this sharing of information that strengthens the mentor-associate partnership.

GUIDE: As a guide, you help navigate the associate through the inner workings of the organization and decipher the "unwritten office rules". The inner workings of the organization are the behind the scenes dynamics, or office politics, that are not always apparent, but critical to know. The "unwritten rules" can include special office procedures, guidelines that are not always documented, policies under consideration, and office interpersonal relations.

TIP: Instruct the associate to review key policy handbooks. Then begin a question/answer session with the associate about the rules and regulations contained in the handbook. This session can lead into a discussion about the inner workings and "unwritten rules" of the organization.

COUNSELOR: The role of counselor allows the mentor to establish a trusting and open partnership. To create a trusting and open partnership, a mentor needs to stress confidentiality. Confidentiality can be promoted by not disclosing personal information shared, to listen carefully and attentively to each others ideas, not to interrupt while the partner is talking, and to make each other feel comfortable.

Non-verbal communication helps create an acceptable comfort level. Non-verbal communication includes:

(1) **Eye Contact.** Maintain appropriate eye contact. A mentor should be sensitive to cultural and communicative tendencies and to what is considered appropriate eye contact. In some cultures, direct eye contact is considered appropriate during listening and speaking. In other cultures, dropping the eyes or averting the eyes during listening are more appropriate.

(2) **Gestures.** Supplement speech with facial and hand gestures. Enthusiasm can be shown by nodding approval, smiling, or shaking the other person's hand.

(3) **Open body posture.** An "open body" posture is one in which your arms rest casually at your side or on a surface. Documented studies have proven that people tend to interpret crossed arms as signaling defensiveness and crossed legs as disagreement.

(4) **Appropriate space.** Space can relate to power. A large desk might be seen as a barrier between the mentor and associate. Chairs should be positioned next to each other, rather than across from one another, to bridge the distance while talking. Remember to maintain proper physical distance from people when talking. Ideally, there should be from six inches to one and a half feet between two people.

The counselor role also encourages the associate to develop problem-solving skills. An associate must be able to think through problems rather than always depending on his or her mentor to provide a solution. To develop the associate's problem-solving skills, advise him or her to try to solve the problem first before seeking advice/assistance.

TIP: To sharpen the associate's problem-solving abilities, ask the associate questions such as: "How would you solve the problem?" or "What do you think the solution is?".

MOTIVATOR: The role of the motivator is required when the associate needs encouragement to complete a difficult assignment, or to pursue an ambitious goal. By providing encouragement, support, and incentives, the associate can be motivated to succeed.

One of the most effective ways to motivate an associate is to frequently provide positive feedback during an assigned task or while the associate strives toward a goal. Positive feedback is a great "morale booster" that removes doubt, builds self-esteem, and results in the associate feeling a sense of accomplishment. Concentrate on what the associate is doing well and relate these successes.

A mentor can also motivate the associate by showing support. Support is shown by making yourself available to the associate, especially during stressful periods. An open door policy is perhaps the best way to show support. Keep in mind that an open door policy means that the door is **always** open to the associate and not just open when it is convenient for the mentor. An associate that knows his or her mentor is always available will not feel intimidated about asking questions and seeking guidance.

Motivate the associate by creating incentives. To create an incentive, explain what the associate can gain from completing a task or "fine tuning" a skill.

TIP: Remember that incentives extend beyond the tangible. Offer incentives such as praise, a chance to attend an interesting seminar, or verbal recognition to peers at a staff meeting.

SPONSOR: A sponsor creates opportunities for the associate that may not otherwise be made available. These opportunities can relate directly to the job or indirectly to the associate's overall professional development. The mentor's goal is to provide as much exposure for the associate as possible, with a minimum of risks. Opportunities should both challenge and instruct without taking away the associates self-esteem. Avoid setting up the associate for failure.

An associate is ready to take on new opportunities when he or she has mastered all required skills and starts to seek more challenging responsibilities.

TIP: A mentor should speak to other people, both inside and outside the organization, who can help identify projects/assignments for the associate.

COACH: At times, a mentor may need to perform the role of coach to help an associate overcome performance difficulties. Coaching can be a complex and extensive process. Before beginning, three questions need to be answered:

- (1) Does the associate have the capability to do the job?
- (2) Is coaching likely to upgrade the associate's skills?
- (3) Is there sufficient time to coach?

Coaching is not an easy skill to perform. Coaching involves feedback. Mentors need to be able to give two different kinds of feedback. The type of feedback given depends on the situation.

- (1) Behavior that the mentor wants to reinforce requires **positive** feedback.
- (2) Behavior the mentor wishes changed requires **constructive** feedback.

Both types of feedback are critical to the associate's professional growth. A mentor must know how to provide feedback.

There are four factors to consider when providing feedback:

- (1) Give **frequent** feedback to provide an associate a better understanding of his or her progress.
- (2) **Quality** feedback is valuable and meaningful. Feedback should be given when warranted.
- (3) Focus on **specific** feedback on the how, when, and why of a situation.
- (4) Provide feedback only on **direct observations**. Do not discuss matters you heard second hand.

Factors to consider when giving constructive feedback include:

- (1) Be descriptive about the behavior.
- (2) Avoid labels such as "immature" or "unprofessional".
- (3) Avoid exaggeration.
- (4) Avoid being judgmental.
- (5) Concentrate on using I statements to indicate these are your perceptions and feelings.

When giving feedback, concentrate on the behavior that the associate should do more of, do less of, or continue performing.

It is important that a mentor avoid giving feedback when:

- (1) They do not know much about the circumstances of the behavior.
- (2) The time, place, or circumstances are inappropriate (for example, in the presence of others).

ADVISOR: As an advisor, the mentor helps the associate develop professional interests and set realistic career goals. The mentor needs to know where the associate wants to go professionally, and help the associate set realistic career goals. A goal is a specific end result the associate wants to achieve by a stated time.

Consider these factors when setting career goals:

- (1) Goals should be **specific**. Goals need to clearly state what the associate wants to achieve.

(2) Goals must have a specific **timeframe** for completion. Interim deadlines will ensure that the associate continues to move toward these goals. It is important not to make goals too future oriented. It is recommended that goal time frames be kept to a maximum three to five year time period.

(3) Goals should be **results-oriented**. The associate needs to concentrate on the result of his or her efforts, not so much on the activities that are required to accomplish them. An activity provides a way of reaching the goals, but the end result (the goal) should not be neglected.

(4) Goals must be **relevant**. The goals should complement Army, agency, or organization goals and objectives.

(5) Goals must be **reachable** and **flexible**. The goals must be within the associate's reach. The associate needs to feel challenged, but not incapable of reaching the goals. Goals should be part of a plan that can be changed as the situation changes.

(6) Goals should be **limited in number**. The associate needs to concentrate on setting goals that will help him or her accomplish what needs to be done within a given period of time.

After goals have been identified, the next step is to determine how they can be achieved. In the resource management community, there are several career building alternatives including:

(1) **Job Enrichment** - enhancing the skills and responsibilities of the current job.

(2) **Reassignment** - moving within or outside the organization, without a change in pay, to develop skills and abilities.

(3) **Detail** - a temporary assignment with the employee returning to his or her regular duties at the end of a specified timeframe.

(4) **Promotion** - changing to a new position at a higher grade and pay level.

(5) **Change to Lower Grade** - a position at a lower grade level sometimes at a lower rate of pay. This is often necessary to qualify for another occupation.

There are several ways to set career goals:

(1) Determine the associate's interests.

(2) Categorize the associate's interests into four key areas: (1) people (helping, serving, caring for, selling, working with others); (2) creative (writing, developing, planning, designing); (3) labor (working with machines, tools, living things); and (4) research (collecting and analyzing data, facts, records).

(3) Identify an associate's knowledges, skills, and abilities (KSAs) within these interest areas. An associate's goals should focus on individual areas of interest.

(4) Help an associate create developmental goals to enhance his or her career, social interactions, and personal endeavors.

(5) Organize the developmental goals as career, social, or personal.

(6) Continuously evaluate an associate's goals. Developmental goals may need to be adjusted as interests change, or as changes occur within the organization.

REFERRAL AGENT: As a referral agent, a mentor works with the associate to develop an **action plan** that outlines what knowledges, skills, and abilities are needed to meet career goals. There are several steps the mentor and the associate need to follow when developing a career action plan.

(1) **Target the areas that require development.** The mentor and associate need to know the technical and professional skills required for the future position. Have the associate talk to people who hold the position, or visit his or her local civilian personnel office to obtain written information about the position. Once this information is obtained, the mentor and the associate can then identify the critical knowledges, skills, and abilities that the associate already possesses and determine which, if any, require development so that the associate meets the requirements of the future position.

(2) **Select developmental activities.** Choose or recommend activities and tasks that the associate can undertake to develop the critical knowledges, skills, and abilities required. Examples include:

(a) Assign job enrichment responsibilities.

(b) Participate in special projects.

(c) Attend workshops, conferences, or seminars.

(d) Pursue educational opportunities.

(e) Participate in cross training or job rotational assignments.

(3) **Determine success indicators.** The associate needs to have a clear vision of what results will come from the developmental activities. The associate needs to be able to answer the question "How will I know I've succeeded?". Measurable and meaningful indicators to the associate must be used. An action plan is an enabler to move the associate towards the career goals.

ROLE MODEL: As a role model, the mentor is a living example of the values, ethics, and professional practices of the Department of Army. Learning by example may be the most effective teaching tool. The associate will learn how to handle situations and interact with others by observing the mentor. For this reason, the mentor needs to strive for high standards of professionalism, solid work ethics, and a positive attitude. The mentor should give the associate an opportunity to learn the positive qualities of an experienced professional.

TIP: When possible, the associate should shadow the mentor so that the associate can observe the mentor in different settings or situations.

DOOR OPENER: The mentor helps the associate establish a network of contacts within, as well as, outside the Department of Army.

An associate needs a chance to meet other people to spur professional and social development. As a door opener, the mentor can introduce the associate to people and resources that can help the associate build a network of contacts.

Stress to the associate that networking is directly related to the number of people from whom he or she can seek assistance or obtain advice. Increase the associate's awareness of personal contacts by asking the associate to consider the number of people he or she knows. The associate should consider:

- (1) With whom do I talk frequently and at what level (Installation, MACOM, HQDA, OSD, Other) are they?
- (2) With whom do I take lunch breaks?
- (3) With whom do I discuss my problems or concerns?

MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Serve as an unbiased confidant and advisor.

Discuss with the associate how he or she achieved his or her current status and suggest steps for the associate to take to achieve his or her personal and professional goals.

Discuss other available resources within the Department of Army that could possibly help the associate achieve his or her goals.

Provide objective and positive suggestions on appropriate office demeanor and acceptable work ethics.

Provide objective and positive suggestions on how the associate may improve job proficiency and productivity.

At least once a quarter, perform an informal assessment of the associate's performance. The mentor will **not** provide input to the associate's annual performance evaluation.

Assist the associate in finalizing the Improvement Plan.

Discuss the Partnership Plan with the associate.

Complete the quarterly RMMP evaluation form.

Expend the required time and effort to make the partnership work.

Notify the program manager or program sponsor if:

- (1) The mentor or associate leaves the organization.
- (2) Phone number, room number, grade, or name changes.
- (3) The mentor is experiencing difficulties with his or her associate.
- (4) The mentor has questions about the mentorship program procedures.
- (5) If the partnership ends - no fault termination clause.

MENTOR CHARACTERISTICS:

To successfully perform the different roles, a mentor must have certain attributes. Characteristics of a successful mentor include:

(1) **Supportive.** A mentor will support the needs and aspirations of the associate. A successful mentor encourages the associate to accept challenges and overcome barriers - to be a risk taker.

(2) **Patient.** A mentor must spend adequate time performing his or her responsibilities. The time requirements of the partnership are as defined by the mentor and the associate. Adequate time must be allowed for the associate to develop in accordance with the Improvement Plan. It is recommended that the mentor and associate talk frequently and, if at all possible, meet monthly. A mentor should calmly tolerate any provocation or delay during the partnership.

(3) **People Oriented.** A mentor is genuinely interested in people and has a desire to help others. A successful mentor is one who has good people skills; that is, knows how to

effectively communicate and actively listen. A mentor should also be able to resolve conflict and give appropriate feedback.

(4) **Good Motivator.** A mentor encourages an associate to do better. A mentor needs to be able to motivate an associate through encouraging feedback and challenging work assignments. The mentor and associate both share the responsibility of identifying motivators. A mentor needs to know what motivates an associate and then use those motivators to stretch an associate's potential by establishing goals that the associate can achieve.

(5) **Effective Teacher.** A mentor must thoroughly understand the skills required of the associate's position and be able to effectively teach these skills to the associate. A mentor must not only teach the skills of the trade, but also **manage** the learning of the associate. This means that a mentor must actively try to recognize and use teaching opportunities.

In addition to teaching the mechanics of the job, a mentor must gradually impart the internal workings of the organization to the associate. The internal workings include the sacred cows, the shall and shall not's, and the office politics.

(6) **Secure in Position.** A mentor must be confident in his or her own career so that pride for the associate's accomplishments can be genuinely expressed. A mentor enjoys being a part of the associate's growth and expansion. The mentor will not feel threatened by the associate developing strengths and abilities.

(7) **Achiever.** A mentor is one who usually takes on more responsibility than required, and volunteers for more activities. A mentor attempts to inspire an associate with this same drive for achievement. A mentor helps an associate set, evaluate, and reach career goals.

(8) **Able to Give Associate Visibility.** A mentor can give the associate the right amount of exposure inside or outside the organization. One way to give exposure is to secure challenging projects for the associate. Another way is to talk with others about the associate's accomplishments.

(9) **Values Department of Army and Public Service.** A mentor takes pride in working for the Department of the Army. A mentor understands and supports the mission, vision, and values of the organization. A mentor should be well versed in policies and procedures.

Keep in mind that an associate looks to his or her mentor for guidance on interpreting policies and procedures. In order to provide this guidance, a mentor needs to know and understand this information.

(10) **Respect Others.** A mentor is one who shows regard for another's well-being. Every person, including the mentor, has certain vulnerabilities and imperfections that must be accepted. A mentor learns to accept an associate's weaknesses and minor flaws, just as the associate must learn to accept the weaknesses and flaws of the mentor. A mentor should help an associate explore his or her vulnerabilities and imperfections. Without passing judgment, a mentor must also recognize that differences in opinions, values, and interests will exist. By accepting such differences, a mentor projects an openness to others.

A successful mentor also has earned the respect of peers, the organization, and/or the community. The mentor is a positive role model.

These characteristics are not equally distributed in everyone. If someone falls short in one or several of these characteristics, it does not mean that he or she cannot be a successful mentor. It just means that he or she needs to strengthen those characteristics that need further development.

TIP: In a formal mentoring program, it is recommended that an associate not be someone you supervise. In reality, however, many mentoring partnerships often evolve from a supervisor-employee relationship.

If an individual ~~is~~ both the associate's supervisor and mentor, he or she needs to: ensure confidentiality of the partnership, avoid favoritism towards the associate, and be sensitive to other employees that you supervise who ~~are~~ your associates.

It is critical that formal mentoring partnerships are kept separate from the supervisor-employee relationship.

If the mentor ~~is not~~ an associate's supervisor, include the associate's supervisor in finalization of the Improvement Plan, include the associate's supervisor in decisions that may include a work schedule change (i.e., mentor recommended project), and don't disclose confidential information an associate has told you to his or her supervisor.

ASSOCIATE ROLES:

The associate, as well as the mentor, wears many hats. These include the roles of gauge, student, and trainee.

GAUGE: The associate uses this role to **gauge** how interactive the mentoring partnership will be. The associate decides upon the amount of dependence and guidance he or she needs. The associate should take the initiative to ask for help and/or advice from the mentor and when to tackle more challenging work.

STUDENT: In the role of **student**, the associate acts as a sponge -- absorbing the knowledges and skills of the mentor. The associate needs to practice and demonstrate what he or she has learned. An associate should be able to interpret, as well as apply, rules and regulations. The associate should provide feedback on his or her progress, and accept feedback from the mentor.

TRAINEE: An associate can also be in the role of **trainee**. There should be a

blending of mentoring with other training approaches. The associate must expand his or her current knowledge base by participating in organization and outside training programs. By participating in other programs, the associate becomes a more well-rounded and versatile Department of the Army employee.

ASSOCIATE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Make initial contact with the mentor.

Identify developmental areas and formulate an Improvement Plan for accomplishing goal(s).

Finalize Improvement Plan with the assistance of the supervisor and mentor. During partnership, continuously work with the Improvement Plan.

Discuss the Partnership Plan with the mentor.

Notify the program manager or program sponsor if:

- (1) The associate or mentor leaves the organization.
- (2) Phone number, room number, grade, or name changes.
- (3) The associate is experiencing difficulties with his or her mentor.
- (4) The associate has questions about mentorship program procedures.
- (5) If the partnership ends (no fault termination clause).

Complete the RMMP quarterly evaluation forms.

Expend required time and effort to make the partnership work.

ASSOCIATE CHARACTERISTICS:

A successful mentoring partnership depends not only on the mentor, but also on the associate. What are the characteristics of a successful associate? They are:

(1) **Eagerness to Learn.** An associate has a strong desire to learn new skills and abilities, and a desire to develop existing skills and abilities. He or she will look for new challenges and learning experiences. The associate will continually seek educational and/or training opportunities to broaden his or her capabilities. Many centrally funded educational opportunities are available: Advanced Resource Management Course, Professional Military Comptroller School, Army Management Staff College, Army Comptrollership Program, Graduate Cost Analysis Program, and Long Term Training. The associate will also strive to elevate his or her level of technical skills and professional expertise to gain a greater mastery of the job.

(2) **A Team Player.** It is important that the associate be cooperative and communicative while interacting with others. An associate should:

- (a) Initiate and participate in discussions.
- (b) Seek information and opinions.
- (c) Suggest a plan for reaching goals.
- (d) Clarify or elaborate on ideas.
- (e) Try to ease tension between parties, and resolve differences.
- (f) Be fair with praise and criticism.
- (g) Accept praise and criticism.

(3) **Patient.** The associate must be willing to put time and effort into the mentoring partnership. An associate must persevere through the difficulties that arise during the learning process.

(4) **Risk Taker.** As a risk taker, an associate must move beyond tasks that he or she has mastered and accept new and more challenging experiences. Taking chances are never easy. An associate must realize that, to grow professionally, it is necessary to assess oneself, to acquire needed skills, to develop new skills, and to make contact with other employees. Mentors should encourage risk taking in their associates.

(5) **Positive Attitude.** A positive attitude means an associate tackles difficulties, is not afraid to fail, and is willing to try. An optimistic associate is more likely to overcome difficulties during the partnership and beyond.

Remember, these are the desired characteristics of an associate. If an associate has only two or three of these characteristics, this does not mean that the mentoring partnership will fail. It may, however, take extra effort to overcome possible obstacles that could arise from lacking one or several of these characteristics.

CHAPTER 3

ESSENTIALS OF A MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

CHAPTER 3

ESSENTIALS OF A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

As the mentoring partnership begins, there are several essential factors to making the mentoring partnership a success. These essential factors include:

- (1) **Respect**
- (2) **Trust**
- (3) **Partnership Building**
- (4) **Self-Esteem**
- (5) **Time**

The first essential factor is **respect**. Respect is established when the associate recognizes knowledges, skills, and abilities in the mentor that he or she would like to possess. The associate should then attempt to acquire these much admired characteristics.

Trust is another essential factor of a successful mentoring partnership. Trust is a two-way street. The mentor and associate both need to work together to build trust. There are four important factors to building trust:

(1) **Communication.** A mentor needs to talk to and actively listen to the associate. It is important to value the associate's opinion and let the associate know that he or she is being taken seriously. The associate can help build trust in the partnership by relaying his or her goals and concerns to the mentor, and by listening to the mentor's views and opinions.

(2) **Availability.** A mentor should be willing to meet with the associate whenever he or she needs to meet. The mentor always should keep the door open. The associate needs to know that the mentor is accessible.

(3) **Predictability.** The associate needs to know that he or she can depend on the mentor as a reliable source of information. The mentor should make it a point to give the associate honest feedback, direction, and advice. The mentor should also be able to predict the needs of his or her associate. Conversely, the associate needs to be consistent in his or her actions and behavior. Although the associate will grow and change during the mentoring partnership, drastic changes in behavior or attitude could signal a problem. The following indicators should signal you that potential trouble is occurring:

- (a) Frequent switches in direction.
- (b) Frequent arguments.
- (c) Frustration at lack of progress.
- (d) Excessive questioning of each decision or action taken.
- (e) Floundering.

(4) **Loyalty.** Never compromise the partnership by discussing the associate's problems or concerns with others. Keep the information discussed in strict confidence. Remember the Partnership Plan discussions are based on confidentiality.

The third essential factor is **partnership-building** activities. When entering into a mentoring partnership, the mentor and the associate become professional partners. There are barriers that all partnerships may face. These barriers may include misunderstanding or an uncertainty of each other's expectations. Following are five improvement activities to help a mentor and an associate overcome these barriers:

- (1) Maintain communication.
- (2) Fix "obvious" problems.
- (3) Forecast how decisions could affect goals.
- (4) Discuss progress.
- (5) Monitor changes.

The mentor and the associate can use the following activities to help build a successful partnership:

(1) **Show Enthusiasm.** Create a positive atmosphere by showing enthusiasm and excitement for the associate's efforts.

(2) **Create an Atmosphere for Emotional Acceptance.** Help the associate feel accepted as he or she experiences professional growth.

(3) **Approach Change Slowly.** Listen to the associate and be responsive to his or her concerns. When drastic changes occur, a person needs time to accept and experiment with these changes.

Partnership-building activities are not only useful when building a mentoring partnership, but also are helpful when the partners interact with others.

The fourth essential factor to a successful mentoring partnership is to build the associate's **self-esteem**. Everyone has the desire to believe that he or she is worthwhile and valuable. Three steps to build the associate's self-esteem are:

(1) Encourage the associate to have realistic **expectations** of him or herself, the mentoring partnership, and the job.

(2) Encourage the associate to have a realistic **self-perception**. A mentor can help define the associate's self-perception by helping identify the associate's social traits, intellectual capacity, beliefs, talents, and roles.

TIP: Always provide honest feedback. The associate deserves the truth, and honest feedback helps the associate to grow and keep a realistic self-perception.

(3) Encourage the associate to change a poor **self-perception**. Changing a poor self-perception requires a lot of commitment from the associate. Two reasons for a poor self-perception include: (1) associates **can't** be the person they would like to be, and (2) associates **won't** be the person they would like to be.

An associate can't change without the knowledges, skills or abilities to change. Mentors can help the associate develop the knowledges, skills, and abilities to become the person he or she wants to be.

Often, an associate with a poor self-perception cannot be the person he or she would like to be because he or she is not willing to do what is required to make the change. The mentor needs to instill in the associate that a poor self-perception can be changed if he or she is willing to make the effort.

TIP: Self-esteem building is an important part of the mentor's job. The most effective way to build the associate's self-esteem is to listen and give positive feedback.

Time is the fifth essential factor of the mentoring partnership. During the mentoring partnership, a mentor needs to make time to interact with the associate. Try not to let routine tasks exclude the associate. Listed below are several ways in which a mentor can make time work for the partnership:

(1) Set meetings with the associate and do not change these times unless absolutely necessary.

(2) Meet periodically, at a mutually agreed upon time and place. Try to pick a time when there will be no interruptions.

(3) Allow adequate time for the associate to grow professionally.

The associate also needs to make time for the mentor. It takes time and effort by the mentor and associate to make the partnership work.

CHAPTER 4

FORMAL MENTORING PROCESS

CHAPTER 4

FORMAL MENTORING PROCESS

There are six steps in a formal mentoring process:

STEP 6. END THE PARTNERSHIP

STEP 5. EVALUATE THE PARTNERSHIP

STEP 4. PERFORM APPROPRIATE ROLE(S)

STEP 3. ESTABLISH GUIDELINES

STEP 2. IDENTIFY A MENTOR OR AN ASSOCIATE

STEP 1. EVALUATE CHARACTERISTICS

1. **Evaluate Characteristics.** The first step is to **evaluate** yourself against **characteristics** required to be a successful mentor or associate. Use the following checklists to do a self evaluation. These checklists are helpful in determining characteristics currently possessed and those that need development.

MENTOR CHARACTERISTIC CHECKLIST (Check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	SUPPORTIVE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PATIENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	PEOPLE ORIENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOOD MOTIVATOR
<input type="checkbox"/>	EFFECTIVE TEACHER	<input type="checkbox"/>	SECURE IN POSITION
<input type="checkbox"/>	AN ACHIEVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDES VISIBILITY
<input type="checkbox"/>	VALUES ORG & PUB SVC	<input type="checkbox"/>	RESPECTS OTHERS

ASSOCIATE CHARACTERISTIC CHECKLIST (Check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<div>EAGERNESS TO LEARN</div>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<div>A TEAM PLAYER</div>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<div>PATIENT</div>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<div>RISK TAKER</div>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<div>POSITIVE ATTITUDE</div>		

Keep in mind that these characteristics are known to be found in successful mentors and associates, but they are not all required.

2. Identify a Mentor or an Associate. The second step is to **identify a mentor or an associate** . If you don't have a mentor or an associate identified, begin by asking yourself the following questions:

- (1) Who do I believe has potential and would benefit from my expertise?
- (2) With whom would I feel comfortable building this kind of partnership?
- (3) Who could I help?
- (4) Who could help me?

When identifying a mentor or an associate, it is important to remember that the person does not have to be exactly like you. Successful mentoring partnerships often occur between people of different genders, ethnic backgrounds, and physical capabilities. Look for an individual who possesses at least some of the mentor or associate characteristics identified in the checklists.

On the RMMP application you can indicate your mentor or associate preference. It is **not** mandatory that you identify a mentor or associate. As a result of completing the application, a mentor or associate match will be made. Formal mentoring is a professional arrangement between a more experienced person and a less experienced person.

3. Establish guidelines. Once a mentor or an associate has been identified, the third step is to **establish** partnership **guidelines**. Using the Partnership Plan as a guide, discuss expectations of the partnership with each other. To establish partnership guidelines, begin by asking:

- (1) What do you want to gain from this mentoring experience?
- (2) How should we work together to make the most of this mentoring experience?
- (3) What are your career/professional goals?

During this step, a schedule should be developed with your partner to ensure enough time will be devoted to the mentoring partnership.

4. **Perform Roles.** The fourth step is to **perform the appropriate roles**. Talk with your partner about the different roles each of you could, and probably will, perform. Your partner may not be aware of the roles he or she is expected to perform. The roles are identified and explained in Chapter 2. Roles, Responsibilities, and Characteristics.

5. **Evaluate the Partnership.** The fifth step is to formally **evaluate** the mentoring experience. Contact your partner, verbally or in person, at least quarterly to find out if expectations are being met, and if both parties are satisfied with the mentoring partnership.

When evaluating the mentoring partnership, there are issues or obstacles that need to be discussed. The mentor, as the senior and more experienced partner, should take the initiative for monitoring the health of the mentoring partnership. The associate is responsible for acknowledging and discussing problems and concerns as they arise.

Quarterly evaluation forms will be distributed by the program manager and program sponsor for completion.

6. **End the Partnership.** The sixth, and final step, of the formal mentoring process involves knowing when to end the partnership. Listed below are three common reasons why mentoring partnerships end:

(1) **Associate grows beyond the boundaries of the partnership.** When an associate begins to gain more confidence and starts to perform more independently, the mentoring partnership may begin to wane. This is acceptable. A mentor wants his or her associate to achieve independence and begin to make decisions on his or her own. This is the ideal reason for a partnership to end. The length of the partnership is not to exceed one year; however, actual length could vary depending on the needs and expectations of the partners.

(2) **Partnership is no longer beneficial.** Either partner may find that the mentoring partnership is no longer beneficial. If this occurs, both the mentor and the associate should think carefully if their expectations were realistic and their behaviors appropriate. Either partner, for any reason, at any time during the partnership can put into effect the no fault termination clause.

(3) **Mentor or associate leaves position or organization/agency.** Always remember that a mentoring partnership **could** end when one partner vacates the position or leaves the Department of the Army. The partnership does **not** have to end if the mentor or associate leaves their position.

CHAPTER 5

MENTORING SKILLS

CHAPTER 5

MENTORING SKILLS

There are three crucial skills - listening, counseling, and career advising - a mentor must possess. Good communication skills are essential in teaching, counseling, coaching, and assisting associates in improving themselves professionally and personally. The mentor must be aware of barriers in communication and work at ways to improve his or her communication skills.

LISTENING SKILLS: Listening skills have to be learned; they are not instinctive. To be an effective listener, use your ears to listen to the verbal message, your eyes to understand the nonverbal message, your undivided attention to show the speaker that the message is important, and your heart to show compassion and understanding.

There are two styles of listening - one-way listening and two-way listening. **One-way listening**, also known as passive listening, occurs when a listener tries to understand the speaker's remarks without actively trying to provide feedback. In this style of listening there is little or no feedback. The listener may deliberately, or unintentionally, send nonverbal messages such as eye contact, smiles, yawns, or nods. However, there is no verbal response to indicate how the message is being received.

One-way listening may cause misunderstandings between the listener and the speaker. Three types of misunderstanding may occur when you use one-way communication:

- (1) The speaker sends a correct message, but the receiver misunderstands.
- (2) The speaker sends an incorrect message, but there is no change, or the opportunity isn't taken, to ask for clarification.
- (3) The message may be vague and the listener interprets the message incorrectly.

Sometimes one-way listening is an appropriate way to listen. If the associate wants to air a gripe, vent frustration, or express an opinion, a mentor may want to practice one-way listening. The associate may not want or need a verbal response, but he or she may only want the mentor to serve as a sounding board.

One-way listening is also appropriate when the mentor wants to relax mentally and be entertained. It would be a mistake to interrupt either partner as he or she relates a joke or story.

Two-way listening involves active participation by the listener and speaker, and verbal feedback. Questioning and paraphrasing are two types of feedback.

The listener asks **questions** to clarify the statements. Asking questions provides more information and a better understanding. A mentor may ask "What do you mean?". By asking this type of question, the mentor is asking the associate to elaborate on information already given.

The second type of verbal feedback is **paraphrasing**. In this type of feedback, the mentor demonstrates that he or she understands the associate's concerns. The mentor restates the associate's ideas in his or her own words without adding any new information.

TIPS: Use a statement to summarize, such as, "Let me make sure I understand..." or "The way you see the problem is...". You want to vary your responses to help the listening process.

A key to strengthening listening skills is to improve concentration. Concentration can be improved by:

(1) **Biting your tongue.** Learn not to get too excited or angry if an associate has a different point of view. Do not immediately draw any conclusions whether or not the meaning is good or bad.

(2) **Listening for the main points.** Focus on the main ideas and make a mental outline of the most important points.

(3) **Resisting distractions.** While listening, try to ignore your surroundings, e.g., outside noises or other conversations.

(4) **Capitalizing upon thought speed.** On average, an individual speaks 125 words a minute. An individual thinks, and therefore listens, at almost four times that speed. Remember not to let your mind stray while you are waiting for your partner's next thought. Instead, try to listen between the lines by interpreting your partner's nonverbal gestures.

(5) **Listening for the whole meaning.** Listen for feeling as well as fact. Consider how you would feel in the situation.

COUNSELING SKILLS:

During the course of the mentoring partnership, the mentor may be required to counsel the associate on conflicts at work, how to make certain decisions, or on problems outside of work.

A mentor should be familiar with the **non-directive approach** to counseling. The focus of this approach is to let the associate discover problems and work out solutions that best fit his or her value system. This type of approach avoids the need for making a diagnosis.

A non-directive counseling approach requires the mentor to use active listening skills. While listening to the associate, the mentor refrains from passing judgment. The mentor should accept the different values and opinions of the associate without imposing his or her own values and opinions.

Make the associate feel comfortable and at ease and show a genuine interest in the associate's welfare. Attempt to get the associate to open up with phrases such as:

- (1) I see, would you like to tell me about it?
- (2) Would you help me to better understand your feelings?
- (3) Why do you feel that way?
- (4) OK, what happened?

As part of the non-directive approach, the mentor should learn how to reflect upon what has been said by the associate. A non-directive approach does not mean that the mentor is passive throughout the discussion. Any productive discussion requires a give-and-take style. The mentor should reflect on the associate's statements by restating the key point(s) to ensure understanding.

It is not unusual for a person to stop talking during a conversation to organize thoughts, focus opinions, interpret feelings, or simply catch his or her breath. A mentor may feel great pressure to break the silence by saying something. However, it is better to let the associate restart the conversation and continue the conversation at his or her own pace. This eliminates putting too much of the mentor's own feelings and biases into the conversation.

TIP: Don't try to anticipate the associate's feelings or thoughts. This can lead the conversation off in the wrong direction. Let the associate voice his or her own feelings and thoughts.

If the associate becomes emotional during the discussion, let him or her work through the feelings. After an emotional release, it is not unusual for a person to feel shame or guilt. The associate should be allowed to talk freely about the emotional release.

Let the associate arrive at his or her own solutions. This helps the associate sharpen problem-solving abilities. The mentor can give advice to the associate, but the mentor needs to emphasize that this advice comes from his or her own perspective or experience. When

the associate asks the mentor for advice, the mentor should preface his or her statements with "From my experience...", or "The way I view the situation...", or "If I were in your situation, I would consider...". These statements help the associate understand that this advice is from the mentor's perspective. It is the associate's choice and responsibility to decide whether or not to apply it.

Confidentiality should always be maintained. Use considerable discretion in handling sensitive or confidential information. Realize that the associate may be feeling anxious, apprehensive, afraid to open up, or wonder how you will use this information.

When counseling the associate, the mentor can learn to better understand how the associate thinks, feels, or acts. In fact, counseling can effectively stimulate the associate's problem-solving ability.

CAREER ADVISING SKILLS:

Helping the associate set and accomplish professional and personal goals within a specific time frame is an essential part of the mentoring process.

The first step in this process is to help the associate **determine his or her interests**. Begin by asking questions such as:

- (1) What activities do you enjoy or find satisfying in your work?
- (2) What do you like best about your present or previous job?
- (3) What outside activities or organizations do you enjoy?
- (4) In what volunteer programs are you active?

Keep in mind that the associate may have difficulty identifying skills and abilities. There are three reasons why:

- (1) People tend to be modest and not want to toot their own horn.
- (2) People tend to recall only those skills necessary for the current job and discount skills learned in previous jobs or in volunteer work.
- (3) People tend to diminish their skills by thinking the skills are common to everyone.

Once the mentor has helped the associate determine his or her interests, the **second step** in the career advising process is to **categorize these interests** into four key areas:

- (1) **People.** Helping, serving, caring for, selling, or working with others.
- (2) **Creative.** Writing, designing, developing, or planning.
- (3) **Labor.** Working with machines, tools, or living things.
- (4) **Research.** Collecting and analyzing data, facts, or records.

By categorizing the associate's interests into any of these key areas, the mentor helps the associate focus on the types of tasks or jobs that he or she enjoys.

Once the mentor has identified the associate's interests, the associate's knowledges, skills, and abilities within these interest areas need to be identified. By asking the associate the following questions, this information can be gathered to help focus the associate's goals:

- (1) What are your work responsibilities?
- (2) What knowledges, skills, and abilities do you need to meet these responsibilities?
- (3) What do you believe are your strengths?

Often knowledges, skills, and abilities are displayed in accomplishments. Accomplishments include the successful completion of any work-related assignment or task that clearly demonstrates a particular skill or combination of skills. Help the associate reveal knowledges, skills, and abilities by asking him or her to think about and closely examine professional and personal achievements. Then ask the following questions:

- (1) What would you consider to be your three most significant accomplishments?
- (2) Why do you consider these to be the most significant?

After the mentor and associate have determined the associate's interests, knowledges, skills, and abilities, the **third step** is to help the associate **develop or isolate developmental goals**. Developmental goals are the desires to enhance one's career, social interaction, and personal endeavors.

Developmental goals are difficult to identify because they are more abstract than tasks. Start with a long-term goal setting plan, no more than five years, and work backwards to identify developmental goals. Working backwards, it is easier to identify

the short-term goals once the long-term goals are identified. To help the associate establish developmental goals, ask him or her the following questions:

- (1) Where would you like to be in five years (long-term goals)?
- (2) What series of one-year goals (short-term goals) could lead to these objectives?

A sample goal setting work sheet is included at the end of this chapter. Keep in mind that the associate's career goals must be realistic and flexible.

Once the developmental goals have been identified, organize these goals under one of the following four categories:

- (1) Career Goals.
- (2) Target Areas.
- (3) Social Goals.
- (4) Personal Goals.

Career goals are goals to enhance one's professional career. To attain career goals, an associate must use his or her knowledges, skills, and abilities.

Target areas are subtasks that the associate needs to accomplish in order to achieve his or her career goals. For example, a GS-09 specialist level Management Analyst has a long term goal to become a GS-13 journeyman Management Analyst. This individual has identified three different target areas to accomplish this goal. The target areas are to improve three areas identified in the Comptroller ACTEDS Plan: (1) Common Knowledges K006 and K007; (2) Management Analyst Competencies K102, K104, K113, and K119; and (3) Abilities A3 and A7.

Social goals include meeting other professionals and building a network of contacts. The associate could join professional organizations, i.e., Association of Government Accountants, Association of the US Army, and American Society of Military Comptrollers, to meet people in his or her profession.

Personal goals are areas of self improvement. If an associate wants to improve his or her analytical skills, the mentor might suggest a course or that the associate volunteer for a special project that would help strengthen this particular skill.

The **fourth** step and last **step** to career advising is to ensure that once the associate's career goals are established, the mentor and associate meet at least quarterly to **evaluate** the associate's **progress**. The mentor and the associate may want to adjust developmental goals as the associate's interests change, or as changes occur within the organization/agency.

GOAL SETTING

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

	CAREER GOALS	TARGET AREAS	SOCIAL GOALS	PERSONAL GOALS
FIFTH YEAR				
FOURTH YEAR				
THIRD YEAR				
SECOND YEAR				
FIRST YEAR				

CHAPTER 6

MENTORING APPROACHES

CHAPTER 6

MENTORING APPROACHES

There are three distinct but interrelated mentoring approaches that can be used in the mentoring process: (1) supervisory/managerial mentoring, (2) informal mentoring, and (3) formal mentoring. Each of these approaches are management tools designed to assist, not usurp, a supervisor's prerogative in performing his or her responsibilities. Our vision of the mentoring process is a synthesis of all three.

SUPERVISORY/ MANAGERIAL

INFORMAL

FORMAL

SUPERVISORY/MANAGERIAL MENTORING:

Supervisory/managerial mentoring focuses more on first-line supervisors and managers providing guidance, assistance, and training to their subordinates. This approach covers the gamut of inherent supervisory responsibilities e.g., evaluating, counseling, coaching, advising, and being a role model. Specific job/performance standards are agreed upon, and both parties sign the standards. The mentoring focuses on both the goals of the organization/agency and associate. The pairing occurs through external forces.

INFORMAL MENTORING:

Informal mentoring, also referred to as traditional mentoring, occurs naturally. The mentor and associate pair together by their own internal forces. Internal forces such as mutual respect, shared experiences, and common interests create the partnership.

The informal mentoring process focuses primarily on the individual goals of the associate. This type of mentoring promotes the examination of the associate's career path through goal setting. The mentor and associate work together to devise an action plan to meet these goals. Informal mentoring not only encourages the associate to establish career goals, but also advocates personal goals. The overall development of the individual is the focus.

Informal mentoring may result in the mentor and associate spending time outside of the office and sharing a friendly, comfortable partnership. This type of mentoring is usually successful because the two parties have a genuine concern for each other's well-being.

FORMAL MENTORING:

Formal mentoring, also known as planned mentoring, focuses on the goals of the organization and the individual. This approach usually results in benefits to both the organization and the associate. Organizational goals are ones that increase productivity, eliminate turnover, and reduce absenteeism.

This mentoring approach focuses more on a formal business working partnership. The mentor and associate rarely see each other outside the office. Formal mentoring depends on a contract between partners. The mentor and associate review and discuss a Partnership Plan that outlines expectations and obligations of their partnership. This partnership occurs through external forces. A mentor and associate are formally assigned to each other.

Formal mentoring usually lasts at least one year. The length can vary depending on the needs and expectations of the partners. Formal mentoring has a systematic approach:

- (1) An **announcement** with an application form is distributed asking individuals to volunteer to participate as a mentor or associate.
- (2) The associate and mentor are **matched** based on information provided on the application form.
- (3) The mentor and associate **develop and agree upon a formal contract** that outlines expectations and obligations of both parties. Both parties sign the contract, Partnership Plan, to bind the partnership.

(4) Participants are **trained** to understand their roles and responsibilities as a mentor or associate.

(5) The mentor and the associate **monitor the partnership** to ensure compliance to the formal contract.

(6) The **program** is **evaluated** on a regular basis for overall effectiveness.

SELF-MENTORING:

In addition to the three mentoring approaches mentioned above, there is also **self-mentoring**.

Self-mentoring is more of a strategy than an approach. There is no mentor promoting the development of the associate. Rather, it is the individual who cultivates his or her own professional growth through self-tutoring activities and resource-finding techniques. Self-mentoring requires the individual to be highly motivated and self-disciplined.

The individual prefers to increase job effectiveness and augment his or her professional talents through building a body of knowledges and skills without the aid of other people.

Some self-mentoring tips that successful individuals have used to help their professional growth include:

(1) **Ask questions** and **listen carefully** to the experts in your field of interest. This includes finding out who the authority is on a subject and asking detailed questions.

(2) **Read and research** materials in the field. Learn new information from books, magazines, and periodicals.

(3) Individuals learn about the inner workings of the resource management community and different leadership styles simply by **observing those in authority**.

(4) **Attend** educational programs, such as conferences, seminars, night classes, or training courses sponsored by the organization.

(5) Volunteer for projects, or join professional organizations. **Seek out new opportunities**.

A mentor may want to alert his or her associate to these self-mentoring tips. An associate should be encouraged to look for opportunities to develop independently.

CHAPTER 7

MENTORING STAGES

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MENTORING STAGES

Mentoring, as a dynamic and ever-changing process, consists of four different stages that provide an associate with the opportunity to learn and grow. A mentor needs to be aware that each stage requires different roles to be performed.

The four mentoring stages are:

- (1) Informational
- (2) Guiding
- (3) Collaborative
- (4) Confirming

In the **Informational Stage**, the associate might have minimal experience with the Department of the Army or in the work place. This stage is most comfortable for the novice associate, who depends heavily on the mentor for support and direction. In this stage, the mentor prescribes, advises, and/or directs. A mentor can perform the role of:

- Teacher
- Guide
- Motivator
- Coach
- Role Model

These roles are not exclusive to this stage. This list serves as a guide for the mentor during this initial stage.

The Informational Stage requires the mentor to give a lot of praise and attention to build the associate's self-confidence. The mentor will devote more time to the associate during this stage than in any of the other stages. A mentor needs to focus on providing detailed guidance and advice to the associate on many, if not all, work place issues and procedures. In this stage, think of the associate as a sponge - soaking up every new piece of information. A mentor should share his or her experiences, trials, and anecdotes with his or her associate during this stage.

FOR EXAMPLE: An associate, new to the organization, was unsure of what was expected in her new position. She asked her mentor for advice who then shared her transition experience into the Department of the Army. By sharing her story and offering support, the mentor was able to provide a more comfortable work place transition for her associate.

TIP: A mentor should give the associate examples of how he or she handled similar situations, and be sure to discuss results and consequences.

The **Guiding Stage** requires the mentor to take a strong approach with the associate. The mentor might need to actually guide the associate to find answers to his or her questions and seek new challenges. The associate usually has some experience, but needs some firm direction.

During the Guiding Stage, the associate probably needs to be coaxed into taking risks. Suggest new strategies, coach, question, and push the associate into discoveries.

Generally, the roles a mentor performs during this stage are:

- Teacher
- Guide
- Counselor
- Motivator
- Coach
- Advisor
- Referral Agent
- Role Model

FOR EXAMPLE: A budget analyst associate, with two years experience in the Department of the Army, faces a problem that could ruin his professional reputation if he makes a wrong decision. He consults his mentor who offers several suggestions which gives the associate a new perspective. The associate was then able to make a better decision after discussing the alternatives with his mentor.

The third stage is the **Collaborative Stage**. During this stage, the associate has enough experience and ability that he or she can work together with the mentor to solve problems jointly and participate in more equal communication. The associate actively cooperates with the mentor in his or her own professional development.

FOR EXAMPLE: A cost analyst associate transferred to a job at Headquarters, Department of the Army. She has four years of government experience but was unfamiliar with the policy and procedures in her new office. While she had made several contacts in her new agency, she relied on her mentor to introduce her to the key department personnel and the challenging projects various groups were undertaking. She discussed policy and procedures of the new organization with her mentor who assisted her in making a smooth transition into the new organization.

In the Collaborative Stage, the mentor may allow the associate to control the partnership by giving the associate the opportunity to work independently. An associate can be given a part of an important project to do on his or her own, with little or no guidance from the mentor.

TIP: A mentor and associate should alternate leadership roles. This will give the associate more opportunities for professional growth and working independently.

The last stage of the mentoring process is the **Confirming Stage**. This stage is suitable for the associate who has mastered technical competencies, but requires a mentor's insight into the inner workings of the organization/agency. In the Confirming Stage, the mentor acts more as a sounding board or empathetic listener.

The roles a mentor can perform include:

- Counselor
- Coach
- Advisor
- Sponsor
- Door Opener
- Role Model

While everyone can benefit from a mentor at any point in his or her career, the ultimate goal of the mentoring stages is to produce a well-rounded, competent employee who outgrows the tutelage of a mentor. The partnership should evolve to the point where the associate is self-motivated, confident, and polished. Ideally, the mentor wants the associate to become a mentor to another colleague.

Each mentoring stage is characterized by the degree of dependence the associate has on the mentor. The degree of associate dependency is greatest at the Informational Stage, with dependency decreasing with each subsequent stage. As the associate grows professionally, the amount of mentor dependence will decrease. The outcome will be a competent and confident individual.

The mentor and associate can begin the mentoring partnership at any of the four stages. The stage in which to start the mentor/associate partnership is determined by the amount of experience the associate has and how much guidance he or she needs. To determine the associate's level of experience, the mentor needs to analyze and decide:

- (1) What knowledges, skills, and abilities the associate currently has.
- (2) What level of experience the associate possesses.
- (3) What amount of guidance does the associate require.

MENTORING STAGES

CONFIRMING

COLLABORATIVE

GUIDING

INFORMATIONAL

ASSOCIATE DEPENDENCY

The mentor needs to observe the associate at work and watch how he or she interacts with others in order to answer these questions. Once the mentor has determined how much guidance and support the associate needs, the mentor can decide which mentoring stage is appropriate for the partnership and which role(s) to perform.

Mentoring partnerships may follow some or all of these stages. There is such a fine line between each stage it is difficult to tell when one stage ends and another begins. The associate will give the mentor verbal and nonverbal signs to indicate when he or she is ready to move into the next mentoring stage.

The mentor needs to continually evaluate the mentoring partnership, and determine when it is time to alter the mentoring style. It is important to remember that the mentoring partnership will stagnate if the mentor's mentoring style remains in a stage the associate has outgrown.

CHAPTER 8

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES IN THE MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

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A mentoring partnership is ever changing. During the course of the mentoring partnership, the mentor and the associate might face potential obstacles. There are potential obstacles unique to a mentor and potential obstacles unique to an associate.

MENTOR OBSTACLES:

What happens when...

...a highly-organized mentor has an associate with a relaxed work style?

...a creative associate has a mentor who practices the old school of thought?

...an assertive mentor has an associate with a reserved personality?

FRUSTRATION happens!

There are several potential obstacles that a mentor might face. These include:

(1) A mentor's **style of mentoring** may not always match the style or needs of the associate. A mentor's mentoring style has a lot to do with who the mentor is and how he or she works. If the mentor is a detail-oriented person, he or she probably tends to give extensive directions or outlines precisely each step required to complete the project/assignment. If the mentor is a person who tends to see the big picture and does not focus on the details, the mentor is more inclined to give the associate minimal instruction. Noting these differences does not make one style better than the other. However, differences in styles between the mentor and the associate can pose as a potential obstacle.

Frustration may also occur when the mentor does not adapt his or her mentoring style to meet the development needs of the associate. As the partnership evolves, the associate's confidence grows as skills develop and successes are relished.

A mentor needs to adjust his or her mentoring style to keep in sync with the associate's evolution. In time, detailed directions or certain problem-solving strategies may be considered stifling by the developing associate. A mentor should consider giving less and accepting more from the associate. To meet the needs of the associate, a mentor needs to periodically evaluate the associate by considering the (1) knowledges, skills, and traits of the associate; (2) mentoring stage the associate is operating in; and (3) needs of the associate.

Once the mentor determines the required amount of guidance the associate needs, he or she can then decide with mentoring style is appropriate for the associate.

TIP: Take verbal and nonverbal cues from the associate to determine the appropriate mentoring style and mentoring stage.

(2) Another potential obstacle for mentors is to have **unrealistic expectations** of the associate. A mentor needs to give the associate time to grow professionally and make mistakes along the way. A mentor should try not to become impatient with the associate nor expect too much too soon.

TIP: Be patient with the associate. Developing the associate's professional skills take time.

(3) **Insufficient time** is another potential obstacle for mentors. Some mentors can't seem to devote enough time to their associates. Other commitments in a mentor's schedule may prevent him or her from spending time with the associate. If a mentor starts to sacrifice time with the associate because of other commitments, the associate may lose faith in the mentor and the mentoring partnership.

(4) Unless the mentor is the associate's supervisor, a mentor may find that the **associate's supervisor feels excluded** from the mentoring partnership. Under no circumstances should a mentor undermine the authority of the associate's supervisor. It is the responsibility of the mentor and associate to keep his or her supervisor apprised of his or her activities.

TIP: Keep the supervisor updated by discussing the associate's achievements, progress, goals, and action plan.

(5) A **hidden agenda** can be an associate's ulterior motive for forming the partnership. Some associates seek high-level, respected mentors with the misguided intent of only furthering their own careers, thus overlooking the other significant benefits of mentoring. Hidden agendas are harmful to the mentoring partnership because the partnership is built on deceit.

TIP: Be honest about motives and keep the lines of communication open.

If the mentor thinks that the associate has a hidden agenda, the mentor should discuss the issue tactfully. Do not directly accuse the associate of having a hidden agenda.

(6) An **associate's inappropriate attitude** toward the mentoring partnership could be another potential obstacle. Some associates expect too much from their mentors. They will demand more time and attention than they actually need.

TIP: Periodically discuss the expectations of the partnership with each other.

Others may expect to control their mentors. A mentor must be firm with the associate about commitments and responsibilities. If a mentor gives the associate an assignment or deadline, the mentor must not accept excuses for poor work or missed deadlines (unless the excuse is beyond the associate's control).

In terms of social etiquette, the mentor must be supportive of the associate and sensitive to cultural differences. In some cultures, there is a preference towards modesty, reserve and control. Whereas in another culture, directness or emotionally intense, dynamic, and demonstrative behavior is considered appropriate.

The mentor is **not** the only one in the partnership that may have to confront an obstacle. There are also potential obstacles that may arise for the associate.

ASSOCIATE OBSTACLES:

Potential obstacles an associate could face include:

(1) One obstacle the associate might face is **jealousy of peers** who do not have a mentor. When others see an associate receiving new key assignments or training opportunities, professional jealousy can occur.

TIP: Suggest that the associate act as an advisor to those who are jealous.

A mentor should teach the associate how to act as an advisor. Then, the associate can gain valuable leadership experience and possibly diffuse professional jealousy. If this does not work, advise the associate to look at this as another opportunity for learning to use his or her interpersonal skills to deal with the situation.

(2) Another obstacle is the attitude of others who believe he or she got to be an associate by practicing the **holding on the coattails of another** theory. This theory suggests that the associate is not earning respect and advancing by his or her own merit, but through his or her association with the mentor.

TIP: Give the associate visibility and let others see his or her competence and abilities.

The mentor needs to allow the capability of the associate to show for itself. Encourage the associate not to brag about the mentoring partnership.

(3) One roadblock that both the associate and the mentor could possibly face is when **one party oversteps the professional boundaries** of the partnership. This occurs when one party wants the partnership to become more personal. The fact that mentoring involves a close and confidential partnership between an experienced employee and a less experienced employee could create this type of obstacle.

TIP: If this occurs, the mentor and the associate should tactfully discuss the issue and determine if the mentoring partnership should continue.

This obstacle should not deter people from forming a mentoring partnership. It only means that individuals should be sensitive to the perceptions of others as well as each other.

(4) Another obstacle an associate might face is when a **mentor falls from favor** and others look with disapproval at the mentor. This is an obstacle which calls for careful reflection when professional needs and opportunities have to be balanced against personal loyalty and integrity. The mentor and associate should discuss the issue.

If the mentor and/or the associate decide that the mentoring partnership cannot be salvaged, both parties need to contact the Program Manager or Program Sponsor.

These are just a few of the potential obstacles that the mentor and the associate may encounter during a mentoring partnership. Time and effort will be required of both partners to overcome these potential obstacles, and make the partnership a success.

CHAPTER 9

BENEFITS OF A FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAM

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MENTOR BENEFITS:

- (1) A chance to cultivate **management, leadership, and interpersonal skills** . The mentor sharpens these skills by delegating challenging work to the associate and providing constructive feedback.
- (2) A source of **recognition from peers** . Others will respect the role a mentor serves in fostering development of an individual and imparting the values of the Department of the Army to the associate.
- (3) The potential for **developing rewarding professional contacts** by interacting with other mentors, as well as contacts made through the associate.
- (4) The ability to **learn from the associate** . Mentoring is a reciprocal partnership where mentors and associates can, and do, learn from each other.
- (6) **Personal satisfaction** of helping an associate grow professionally and personally.

ASSOCIATE BENEFITS:

- (1) The associate has a **role model and sounding board** . By using the mentor as a role model, the associate can learn from example. The associate can use the mentor as a sounding board to express new ideas or to vent frustration.
- (2) For the novice associate, mentoring allows for a smoother **transition into the work force**. An associate fresh from college may have unrealistic expectations and naive illusions. A mentor can make this adjustment period easier through communication, understanding, and guidance.
- (3) For the seasoned associate, a mentoring partnership helps him or her to feel more comfortable with the new environment and allows a quicker **adjustment to the organizational culture**.
- (4) Opportunity for **challenging and interesting projects** . A less experienced associate, under a mentor's tutelage, can be given a chance to try different and more advanced tasks.
- (5) Opportunity to **acquire knowledge and development skills**.
- (6) **Observe and interact** with experts in their functional area. **Network** opportunities.
- (7) One-on-one **feedback** on performance.

(8) Professional and personal development offer **potential for career advancement**. Studies have found that professionals in mentoring partnerships are more likely to advance faster.

ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS:

Incorporating the mentoring process into daily work activities also benefits the organization. Mentors help manage change within the organization. They can help employees see the big picture. Mentors also develop employees to maximize productivity. Listed are some examples of how the Army can benefit from formal mentoring:

(1) The Army gains a team of **well-rounded and motivated employees**. Both mentors and associates have opportunities to expand their leadership, interpersonal, and technical skills through their partnership.

(2) Mentoring offers an effective way of **assimilating employees** into the work force. Because mentors pass on their values, ethics, and standards, this process ensures the future success of the organization and the Army.

(3) Mentoring is also beneficial when **recruiting new employees**. This type of program makes the organization more attractive to potential employees because it shows that the Department of Army cares about the well-being of its employees.

(4) The Department of Army retains a **qualified, quality workforce**. In an ever changing environment, there is a greater need to retain qualified employees. Mentoring fosters closeness and loyalty to the Army. An associate who feels this closeness is less likely to leave the organization when times get tough.

(5) The development of **employees with leadership potential**. These skills are developed during the partnership

The mentoring process can be traced to three of the six Army imperatives: (1) maintain a quality force; (2) conduct demanding, realistic training; and (3) develop competent, confident leaders. Realizing the benefits to be gained by having a formal mentoring process, the Army made mentoring (leader development) its foundation for developing competent and confident leaders.

The Army strongly supports the concept of mentoring in training its officers and noncommissioned officers. They see the benefits to be derived not only for the Army, but also for the mentors as well as the associates.

CHAPTER 10

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MENTORING

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QUESTION 1: Does a person really need a mentor in order to succeed?

RESPONSE: It is possible for a person to be successful without the benefit of a mentor. However, more often than not, successful men and women acknowledge the value of a senior person who helped them along the path to success. In today's competitive environment, it is helpful to have a person who believes in, teaches, advises, sponsors, and critiques you.

QUESTION 2: Do formal mentoring programs really work?

RESPONSE: Yes. The programs are usually voluntary and supported by the senior management of the organization. Both the private sector and public sector departments/agencies, which have encouraged the informal mentoring process, are now adding structure to their programs and adopting a more formal approach to the mentoring process.

QUESTION 3: Doesn't there need to be chemistry between the mentor and associate?

RESPONSE: Not for a formal mentoring partnership. The only requirement is that the mentor and associate respect and trust each other.

QUESTION 4: Can a person have more than one mentor?

RESPONSE: Yes. We recommend a series of short partnerships as the optimum approach. It is good to have a variety of mentoring experiences but not necessarily simultaneously.

QUESTION 5: Doesn't the mentor have to be older than the associate?

RESPONSE: Generally, mentors are older because they are more experienced. The important thing is for the associate to identify his or her needs and then ask someone to be your mentor regardless of age. The associate should want a mentor who will best meet his or her needs.

QUESTION 6: Can males mentor females and vice versa?

RESPONSE: Yes. Cross-gender mentoring is not uncommon, especially as more women are migrating into senior management. Partners should be aware of the dynamics that are typically present and the stereotypes that others may hold as true.

QUESTION 7: What do mentors and associates do together?

RESPONSE: Mentors and associates can share a variety of skill developmental activities. They can talk together, attend meetings, conferences, and other events; work on projects, role play situations and discuss results; and discuss written material. The associate can also observe a mentor performing a given task.

QUESTION 8: How often do mentors and associates have to get together in order for the partnership to work?

RESPONSE: As a minimum, monthly meetings are recommended. However, the developmental activities will determine the frequency of the meetings. Partners should make use of all available means of communication, i.e., e-mail, correspondence, telephone, and face-to-face.

QUESTION 9: What are some of the problems that can occur in the mentoring partnership?

RESPONSE: A few problems that can occur are not enough time and energy to spend on the partnership; resentment on the part of individuals not chosen to be associates or mentors; jealousy of peers; unreasonable expectations of each other; one partner taking unfair advantage of the other; lack of mentoring skills on the part of the mentor; inappropriate romantic involvement.

QUESTION 10: How can these problems be prevented or solved?

RESPONSE: A thorough discussion and a good Partnership Plan at the outset can preclude many problems. Mentors and associates should be candid about their partnership and focus on its primary purpose of professional development. The expectations of each partner must be understood.

QUESTION 11: Is it necessary to eventually separate from the mentor?

RESPONSE: The RMMP is a one-year program. The formal mentoring partnership must end. The purpose of the partnership is to build skills. Once the objective is accomplished, the partnership should end and the associate must be left to succeed on his or her own.

QUESTION 12: What, if anything, does the mentor get from the partnership?

RESPONSE: The benefits to the mentor are numerous. They include pride in helping another person, and contributing to the future of the organization. Mentors get recognition from their peers and superiors for being visionary and developing the future leaders of the organization. Mentors gain a different perspective of the organization from the associate which contributes greatly to the mentor remaining in touch with all levels of the organization.

QUESTION 13: How do organizations benefit from mentoring?

RESPONSE: Organizational benefits include increased productivity by the mentor and associate, better assessments gained by both partners, improved management and technical skills, and discovery of latent talent.

QUESTION 14: Does long distance mentoring work?

RESPONSE: If key ingredients are present (mutual trust and respect, common goals, meaningful contact, expending required time and effort), both parties in the mentoring process will benefit. Long distance partnerships **do** work if both partners are willing to expend the required time and effort.

QUESTION 15: Isn't mentoring just another passing fad?

RESPONSE: No. In the late seventies and early eighties, the words mentoring and mentor received a lot of media attention. After a while the media moved on to other topics. However, the issues of glass ceilings, under representation of women and minorities in senior management in both private and public sectors, and work force diversity have brought mentoring back into focus. Many organizations envision mentoring as having a positive impact on the establishment in addressing the issues above.

QUESTION 16: What happens when a mentor and associate get romantically involved with each other?

RESPONSE: Romantic involvement dramatically changes a mentoring partnership. Mentors and associates should immediately terminate their formal partnership if romantic involvement occurs. Objectivity is lost in such partnerships. The credibility of both partners may be questioned.

QUESTION 17: Can a partnership last longer than one year?

RESPONSE: The length of a partnership can vary depending on the needs of the partners. It is realistic that a partnership can last less than one year, or longer than a year. If you want to formally continue your partnership beyond a year, both partners need to resubmit an application to the RMMP Program Sponsor. On the application form, the preference for a mentor or associate needs to be included. You will be matched and receive official notification of your partnership. If you choose not to resubmit an application, your partnership can continue on an informal basis.

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REFERENCES

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AVAILABLE RESOURCES

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The following documents are available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management & Comptroller), Comptroller Proponency Office, Room 3D622, 109 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-0109:

(1) Army Civilian Training Education, & Development System (ACTEDS) Comptroller Plan (Oct 95), The ACTEDS Plan is available hard copy, World Wide Web, and on disk.

(2) MACOM/Agency Comptroller Career Program Roster.

(3) Professional Development Guide, Functional Area 45 (Comptroller) Career Field (Oct 95).

(4) Army Career Civilian Evaluation System (ACCES) Application Package.

The following documents can be obtained from the local servicing civilian personnel office:

(1) Department of the Army Pamphlet 690-43, A Supervisor's Guide to Career Development and Counseling for Career Program Employees (18 Aug 89).

(2) FY XX Catalog of Civilian Training, Education, and Professional Development Opportunities (published annually).

